

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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40

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 EB-11 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 RSR-01 /102 W

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O R 231615 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 270

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 3828

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: GOV BL

SUBJ: BANZER ANNOUNCES " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" IN 1974

REF: LA PAZ 3515

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. IN EVENING JUNE 22 SPEECH PRESIDENT BANZER, IN PRESENCE OF MNR AND FSB CHIEFS AND ARMED FORCES HIGH COMMAND, ANNOUNCED THAT " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" WOULD OCCUR IN 1974. BANZER SAID THAT GOB WOULD " DICTATE PERTINENT NORMS FOR PROCESS OF CONSTITUTIONALIZATION WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS", AND THAT A SPECIAL COMMISSION WOULD BE FORMED TO " STUDY THE INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL LAW", WHICH WOULD BE " ADEQUATE TO THE PRESENT TIME AND IN THE SUPREME INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY."

2. BANZER ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALISM AFTER RECOUNTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS REGIME DURING PAST TWO YEARS. HE NOTED THAT HIS THEME HAS BEEN " UNITE IN ORDER TO GOVERN", THEN CITED THE ALLIANCE OF THE MNR AND FSB AS AN HISTORICAL EXAMPLE OF PARTIES PUTTING NATIONAL INTERESTS ABOVE SECTARIAN ONES. BANZER STATED THAT SUPPORT OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES,  
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INDEPENDENTS AND CAMPESINOS CONSTITUTED A " NATIONAL CONSENSUS"  
WHICH, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES, HAD  
PERMITTED THE COUNTRY TO PROGRESS TO THE POINT THAT  
" CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" SHOULD OCCUR TO " CONSOLIDATE THE  
WORK ACCOMPLISHED, GUARANTEE THE OBJECTIVES REALIZED, AND  
ADVANCE NEW GOALS FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE COUNTRY."  
END UNCLASSIFIED

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL COMMENT: BANZER DID NOT SPECIFICALLY  
MENTION ELECTIONS OF ANY KIND IN HIS SPEECH, BUT THE TERM  
" CONSTITUTIONALIZATION", COUPLED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF  
AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL LAW, IMPLIES ELECTIONS. THE  
PRESS IS ALREADY PREDICTING THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD,  
AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOME FORM OF ELECTIONS WILL BE EXPECTED  
BY THE POPULACE. BANZER WAS NOT SPECIFIC ON THE TYPE OF  
ELECTORAL LAW AMENDMENTS HE HAD IN MIND.

4. BANZER' S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED AT THIS  
TIME. ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSTITUTIONALIZATION,  
E. E., ELECTIONS, HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE DISCUSSED IN  
POLITICAL CIRCLES, AND ALTHOUGH BANZER MENTIONED THE  
POSSIBILITY OF SEEKING A MEANS TO LEGITIMIZE THE POLITICAL  
PROCESS TO THE AMBASSADOR ON JUNE 11 ( REFTEL), AND VAGUELY  
REFERRED TO THE SUBJECT IN A JUNE 14 SPEECH IN COCHABAMBA,  
THERE HAS BEEN NO NOTICEABLE ENTHUSIASM FOR ELECTIONS BY  
THE PARTIES COMPRISING THE FPN AND THE GOB NOR BY THE  
ARMED FORCES. IN FACT, MANY IN THE ARMED FORCES REPORTEDLY  
FEAR THAT ELECTIONS WOULD MEAN THAT MNR CHIEF PAZ ESTENSSORO,  
WHO IS ANATHEMA TO MANY MILITARY OFFICERS, WOULD BE ELECTED,  
AND SOME WOULD PROBABLY GO TO ANY EXTREME TO FORESTALL THAT  
EVENTUALITY. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO SPECULATE WITH ANY  
DEGREE OF ASSURANCE ON THE OUTCOME OF ELECTIONS, IT IS  
OBVIOUS THAT BANZER HAS TAKEN A STEP WHICH SHOULD CONSOLIDATE  
HIS POSITION AT LEAST UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE HELD, AND POSSIBLY  
CONSIDERABLY LONGER IF HE SHOULD BE A CANDIDATE.  
END CONFIDENTIAL  
SIRACUSA

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:**  
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**Draft Date:** 23 JUN 1973  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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